

I note that, last week, the White House honored Tamara Brown from Hamburg, New York, as a champion of change for her work with young women and their parents and teachers.

Seven years ago, Tamara founded Tech Savvy, a program using fun and innovation to inspire students to explore their talents in science and math and to pursue our Nation's careers of the future. In bringing together industry, academic and community leaders, Tamara has helped so many young western New Yorkers discover their full potential. She has helped prepare them for some of our Nation's highest-paying and most competitive career fields.

I applaud Tamara Brown for helping girls from western New York train for careers in science, and I congratulate her on this wonderful recognition.

BIG GOVERNMENT IS THE TOP CONCERN FOR AMERICANS

(Mr. HULTGREN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HULTGREN. Some in this Chamber believe that the answer to our Nation's problems is more government, that we need more unchecked spending, more unelected bureaucrats, and more rules and regulation in our everyday lives.

Yet, in a Gallup Poll just this week, 64 percent of Americans across the political spectrum responded that their biggest fear and the greatest threat to our country is Big Government. They've seen, just as I've seen, that burdensome rules and regulation and out-of-control spending and debt bring us nothing but high unemployment and an uncertain future for our kids and our grandkids.

That's why the House Republicans have been working tirelessly this year to pass pro-growth, pro-jobs bills that will restore the confidence our Nation's job creators need to put Americans back to work again. Yet nearly 30 of these bills, which would restore reasonable regulation, reduce spending and create a smaller, less intrusive Federal Government, continue to languish over in the Senate, which still refuses to address the needs of unemployed Americans.

We can't wait. Pass these jobs bills so that Americans can start working again and so that America can move forward.

IN THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS, CHANUKAH, AND KWANZA, LET'S PASS A CLEAN BILL

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. This year and every time the Democrats have tried to do the right thing for the American people, the Republicans say "no" unless they add their poison pills. In the past, that might have led to negotia-

tions that might have ended in a bipartisan solution—but not so today.

Today, Republicans are trying to force us to accept the Keystone pipeline before we are sure it is safe for the communities it will traverse and won't make the air we breathe dirtier than it already is. The President is right to wait until those things are assessed. In their zeal to kill the Affordable Care Act, they want to slash the Public Health and Prevention Fund and other programs that keep people healthy and reduce health care costs for families and our country.

Democrats have been calling for passing our Make It in America and other jobs bills, but the Republicans insist on jobs that damage the public health and on killing jobs in the only sector that is growing—health care. Because they have not helped the recovery, our fellow Americans still need the payroll tax deduction and unemployment insurance and a fix of doctors' Medicare reimbursements so that they can continue services to the millions of Americans on Medicare.

Let's do a clean bill in the spirit of Christmas, Chanukah and Kwanza.

A big "welcome home" to our troops. I thank them all for their service.

TROOPS RETURNING FROM IRAQ

(Mr. CICILLINE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CICILLINE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor our brave men and women returning home from Iraq, especially Rhode Island's Company D, 126 TAC.

Thank you for your tremendous dedication, selfless efforts, and courageous service to our country.

Tragically, thousands of our servicemembers have made the ultimate sacrifice, and I join all Americans in honoring their service and sacrifice and those of their families.

It is because of you that we are able to enjoy the great freedoms, privileges, and rights we have here at home.

With the homecoming of our troops from Iraq, we must keep our promise to our veterans. On the battlefield, the military pledge is to leave no soldier behind. As a Nation, let it be our pledge that, when they return home, we leave no veteran behind. We must do everything we can to honor them by guaranteeing they have the help they need in finding employment, in securing housing, and in accessing quality health care.

The men and women who have served our country demonstrate the ideals of bravery and patriotism. Now let us work together to create a future worthy of their service.

REPUBLICAN EFFORTS TO CUT UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

(Mr. PETERS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose Republican efforts to slash unemployment benefits.

Earlier this week, House Republicans passed legislation that would cut 40 weeks of unemployment benefits and impose new hurdles for Americans relying on this critical lifeline. With five job seekers in the United States for every available job, the average time it takes an unemployed worker to find a new job is 10 months. Instead of passing the American Jobs Act and getting our Nation's long-term unemployed back to work, Republicans are cutting benefits which millions of Americans rely on for groceries, utilities, and rent.

The Republican plan would hurt workers who are having difficulty in finding new jobs and would pull billions of dollars out of our still-recovering economy. Poverty is at its highest level since 1993; but unemployment benefits kept over 3 million Americans, including 1 million children, out of poverty in 2010; and now Republicans are fighting to gut this necessary lifeline.

During this holiday season, when millions of Americans are worried about being able to pay their rent, I urge my colleagues to oppose slashing unemployment benefits.

BENNY COCKERHAM, III

(Ms. EDWARDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to our servicemen and -women who end their mission in Iraq.

Like many, I woke this morning to the End of Mission ceremony, and I thought about Corporal Benny "Gray" Cockerham, III of North Carolina. He was the son of my good friends Ben and Jill Cockerham. He lost his life at age 21 in al-Anbar province in Iraq on October 21, 2005.

Like his father, he joined the Marine Corps in service to this Nation, and he is survived by Ben and Jill; his wife, Amanda; and his brother, Adam.

And like the 4,486 other men and women who lost their lives in Iraq, the mission has ended.

I want to pay tribute today to all of our servicemen and -women for their service and for their sacrifice and especially to my friends Ben and Jill for the loss of your son. I remember when he was born on June 28, as we shared a birthday, and I want you to know that the Nation is ever grateful for all your sacrifice and for your service.

HONORING UNILEVER NATIONAL PARKS CONGRESSIONAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

(Mr. COSTA asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I too rise in honor of our troops who served honorably not only in Iraq but who continue to serve throughout the world in